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MEDIA ADVISORY

Immediate release

First Pan-African Forum on Women's Entrepreneurship Development
In Response to the Financial and Economic Crisis
27 – 29 October, 2009
Cairo, Egypt

What: The first Pan-African platform jointly organized by AfDB and ILO to discuss concrete challenges and significant opportunities to promote women-owned enterprises in response to the financial and economic crisis.

When: 27 - 29 October 2009.

Where: Cairo, Egypt.

Why:

- To mainstream the key role of Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) into the recovery packages aimed at mitigating the impact of the global financial and economic crisis
- To promote the International Labour Organization's Global Jobs Pact and African Development Bank's (AfDB) African Women in Business Initiative's response to the global financial and economic crisis
- To share knowledge on effective monitoring of Women Entrepreneurship Development impact and contribution to women economic empowerment
- To give high visibility to African women entrepreneurs and to enhance and promote partnership for responding to women entrepreneurs' needs.
- To identify strategic orientations for strengthening future WED interventions and contribution to creating an enabling environment for WED, enhancing women enterprises access to finance and linking WED to growth drivers in order to ensure women enterprise sustainability.

Who: International Labour Organization (ILO), African Development Bank (AfDB), ILO tripartite constituents, women entrepreneurs from various African countries, donors, NGOs.

Background information

At its 98th session (June 2009) the International Labour Conference highlighted the importance for ILO to extend programmes to foster women's entrepreneurship and economic development in the conclusions from the general discussion on gender equality. Further, at the ILO Summit on the Global jobs Crisis in June 2009, ILO constituents adopted the Global Jobs Pact which identifies the need to focus priority attention to protecting and growing employment through sustainable enterprises and to enhancing support to those people most hit by the crisis, the majority who are women. The Cairo Women's Entrepreneurship Development Forum is part of the implementation framework of the Global Jobs Pact, and is a preparation for the 1st African Decent Work Symposium on Recovering from the Crisis (Ouagadougou 30/11/2009 – 01/12/2009). The Pact urges measures to retain persons in employment, to sustain enterprises and to accelerate employment creation and jobs recovery combined with social protection systems, in particular for the most vulnerable, integrating gender concerns on all measures.

In the context of the crisis, the AfDB had also the responsibility to respond very quickly with the notion that Africa's marginal integration in global trade and the financial environment has not spared the continent from the contagious effects of the financial crisis, which is certainly not temporary. The crisis does not only add to existing vulnerabilities, it also requires sustained and concerted efforts to return to the path of growth. Working in concert with other development partners and adapting financial instruments make it possible to tackle the most important steps: fast-tracking support to eligible low-income countries, keeping trade moving, providing liquidity, helping the institution's regional member countries (RMCs) stay the course of sound policy frameworks and filling financing gaps in key infrastructure projects.

For media coverage, interviews and photos ops:

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The ILO is dedicated to bringing Decent Work to the people of all countries. For more information you can view a short Web movie at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dw/index.html>